

capitalis. Two of them measured .58 by .48 and .57 by .45. They were taken on the 4th of June.

In conclusion, I hope that other ornithologists will take a little pains to supply the remaining blanks in the information we have of the nests and eggs of this interesting group. There remain *P. magnirostris*, *P. fuscatus*, *P. tristis*, *P. viridanus*, *P. affinis*, *P. indicus*, *Reguloides trochiloides*, *R. viridipennis*, *R. erochroa*, *R. maculipennis*, and *R. castaneiceps*.

P. magnirostris, *P. viridanus*, and *P. affinis* breed in Cashmere, and *P. tristis* in Ladak. I saw *P. indicus* in great numbers ascending the hills towards Simla about the end of April; and I once shot one at Almorah, in May 1868; but they go far beyond that place to breed, to the immediate neighbourhood of the great snowy ranges, to find a climate as cold as that of Siberia.

IV. *On an undescribed Bird from the Island of Rodriguez.*

By ALFRED NEWTON, M.A., F.R.S., &c.

LEGUAT in his charming work* several times incidentally mentions among the consolations which he and his fellow-exiles found in the Island of Rodriguez, the abundance of "Perroquets." In the first passage (i. p. 67) he records their predilection for the nuts of a tree somewhat like an olive; in the second (i. p. 107) he speaks of their being "verds & bleus," "sur tout de médiocre & d'égale grosseur," and having flesh not less good than that of young Pigeons; in the third (i. p. 132) he states that some of them were instructed by his company, and that they took one, which spoke French and Flemish, with them to Mauritius.

The second of the passages just cited is so vague as to raise the question whether there were green Parakeets and blue Parakeets, or only Parakeets possessing a combination of both colours; and the solution of the doubt would require the discrimination of judges better than those who had to hear the famous case of 'Stradling *versus* Stiles,' the issue whereof was

* *Voyages et Avantures de François Leguat, &c.* London: 1708. (First edition quoted.)

whether, under the terms of a will, specifying certain "black and white horses," the plaintiff should have horses which were 'pyed.' It does not seem that this celebrated cause was ever settled; for the learned Martinus Scriblerus, who reports it, concludes by saying, "Et sur ceo le court *advisare vult*;" and so in the present case ornithologists were compelled to suspend their judgment.

A little more light is thrown on this obscure subject by the following excerpts from Pingré's journal, kindly transcribed for me some time ago by Professor Alphonse Milne-Edwards from the original manuscript then preserved in the library of Ste. Geneviève at Paris. Pingré was in Rodriguez in 1761, occupied with observations on the transit of Venus. He writes (p. 195):—"La perruche me semblait beaucoup plus délicat." [He had just been mentioning the esculent qualities of a species of *Pteropus*.] "Je n'aurais regretté aucun gibier de France, si celui ci eut été plus commun à Rodrigue: mais il commence à devenir rare. Il y a encore moins de perroquets quoiqu'il y en ait eu encore autrefois en assez grande quantité, selon Fr. Leguat, et en effet une petite isle au sud de Rodrigue a encore conservé le nom d'Isle aux perroquets." It would hence appear that there was a "Perruche" and a "Perroquet," though unfortunately Pingré does not say what either was like.

Now it will perhaps be recollected that in 1864 my brother Edward observed a flock, and obtained an example of what he believed to have been *Agapornis cana* in Rodriguez (Ibis, 1865, p. 149); but this is said to have been a species introduced there, no doubt since Leguat's time. On the other hand, in 1867 Professor Alphonse Milne-Edwards described the fragment of a Parrot's *maxilla*, found in the caves of that island with bones of its Solitaire (*Pezophaps solitarius*), and sent to my brother by Mr. George Jenner. This very indifferent relic was admirably shown* by that accomplished ornithologist to have many resemblances to the genus *Eclectus*, to which he doubtfully referred it under the name *Psittacus (Eclectus?) rodericanus*. The large size of the bird (to whatever group it belonged), equally with

* Ann. Sc. Nat. (5) Zool. viii. pp. 145-156, pls. 7, 8; C. R. lxx. pp. 1121-1125.

the small size of the *Agapornis* seen by my brother (to say nothing of the story of its later introduction), precludes either from being the "Perroquet" characterized by Leguat as of "médiocre grosseur," and again mentioned by Pingré. Accordingly this last remained to be discovered, while the "Perruche" of Pingré may be set down as the species indicated by M. Milne-Edwards.

It was accordingly with no small interest that I learned some months ago, from my brother Edward, that he had received from Mr. Jenner, the magistrate of Rodriguez (to whom we owe so great a debt for his examination of the caves of that island), an example of a "Parrot" preserved in spirit. My brother, with no small amount of self-denial, would not open the tin case which enclosed this specimen, fearing that it might thereby sustain injury, but transmitted it to me; and a few weeks since it reached me in safety. On opening the case with the assistance of Mr. Bartlett, who is always so ready to do an obliging act, we found its contents to be a bird of the genus *Palæornis* in excellent preservation; and, in full confidence that it has never been named or described, I here characterize it as

PALÆORNIS EXSUL, sp. n.

Diagn. (*fœminæ*). *P. mediocris*, griseiglaucus, vitta menti obscura nigra; remigibus externe cæruleo lavatis, interne nigris.

Long. tot. 16, alarum expans. 22, alæ a flex. 7·5, caudæ 8·5, acrotarsi ·6, dig. med. sine ung. 1·1, hallucis sine ung. ·5, maxillæ a fronte 1, ejusdem a rictu ·83, mandibulæ ab articulo 1·48, poll. Angl.

Hab. in Insula Rodericana.

Mus. A. et E. Newton (exempl. i.).

Descriptive of a female. Of moderate size. General appearance greyish-glaucous, darker above than beneath. From the corners of the mouth proceeds an ill-defined dull black chin-stripe, which becomes broader as it passes backward and upward, ceasing somewhat abruptly on reaching the level of the ears. Head, nape, shoulders, upper wing-coverts and rectrices above dull greyish-glaucous, the blue tinge in which predominates when the bird is seen against the light, and the green when seen in the contrary aspect; the outer rectrices paler. Rump verditer-blue. Primaries with their outer and most part of their inner webs deep greenish-blue, the former with narrow lighter edges,

and the latter broadly bordered with pitch-black; shafts and lower surfaces greyish-black. Secondaries much the same as the primaries, but of a still deeper shade. Breast dull greyish-glaucous, but lighter than the upper parts, and passing on the belly into verditer, which becomes lighter and greener on the vent. Rectrices beneath yellowish-grey, darker toward the tips of the longer feathers. Bill black; legs and toes —(?), claws dark horn-colour. The skin of the chin, where the feathers are scanty, of a bright red when the specimen was taken from the spirit.

I would remark that this bird is by no means to be regarded as a mere representative species or conspecies of either of the forms already known to inhabit the Mascarene islands (*Palæornis eques* or *P. wardi*), but thoroughly distinct and not very nearly allied to them, or indeed to any other species. I should have liked, according to what I hold to be the best practice in nomenclature, to have given it a specific name in some way descriptive of its appearance; but this I have found difficult, and therefore, in the belief that in this glaucous bird we see one of the “*Perroquets verts & bleus*” of Leguat, I have chosen a name for it which may help to commemorate the first writer who seems to have observed it—and in bestowing upon it the appellation of *PALÆORNIS EXSUL* have had in my mind the exile through whose means we are in some degree acquainted with the marvellous original fauna of the island which was to him productive of so much happiness as a prelude to so much misery.

Since I received the specimen above described, two bones which I believe to belong to the same species have reached me from my brother. They are a portion of a lower mandible and a fragmentary sternum, and were sent to him by Mr. Jenner as having been found in a cave with bones of *Pezophaps* and other birds, an account of which will in due time be published.

The editor of ‘*The Ibis*’ kindly offered me a figure of the type specimen of this species; but as it is unluckily that of a female bird, I refrain from giving one, trusting that before long Mr. Jenner’s exertions will enable us to furnish a representative of the other sex, which is not unlikely to prove a bird of greater beauty.

Magdalene College, Cambridge,
10 November, 1871.